

*European Identity and the  
Legitimacy of the EU*

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## 1. Introduction

The question of legitimacy and identity of the EU is on the agenda of public and scientific discussions since the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty (1993). As this treaty came into effect the European Community (EC) became the European Union (EU). This transition was a turning point in the process of European integration. Since then we witness the transformation of an intergovernmental regime to a supranational regime with far reaching competences. This transformation has deeply changed the basis of legitimacy of the European regime (Beetham und Lord 1998; Blondel, Sinnott und Svensson 1998; Katz und Wessels 1999; Thomassen und Schmitt 1999). An indirect legitimation, mediated by the nation states, is no longer sufficient. Due to two events these discussions have lately gained in particular severity: Firstly, the failure of the constitutional referenda in France and the Netherlands, and secondly, the debate on the potential accession of Turkey to the EU. Here, two fundamental questions that concern the core of the self understanding and the future development of the EU overlap: How deeply should the EU be politically integrated and how far to the East and Southeast should it be enlarged? (Faber und Wessels, 2005)

The political integration of the EU refers to the institutional design of the EU regime. Disregarding what this institutional design exactly looks like, the EU regime is no longer thinkable as an elite project only, but also needs the support of the EU citizens. This points to the question of *legitimacy* of the EU.

Every enlargement of the EU is linked to a whole series of subsequent problems. One of these problems is demarcation. No political community can renounce to such a boundary drawing. This refers to the question of *identity* of the community of EU citizens. This question is particularly relevant when the boundary shall be pushed beyond regions which in the self understanding of citizens of the European core states do not pertain to Europe.

As indicated, the legitimacy of the EU first of all refers to the aspect of ‘deepening’ and the identity of the EU to the aspect of ‘widening’. Following a well established understanding, a collective identity is, however, also a necessary precondition of the legitimacy of a regime. Therefore *identity* and *legitimacy* are strongly interrelated.

Concerning the EU this relationship entails several questions that are discussed controversially: What do the notions of legitimacy and identity mean? Is a European identity possible at all? How does the national identity relate to a European identity? Is the sought after European identity part of a multiple identity? Which factors can promote a European identity and the legitimacy of the EU? These questions shall be the topic of the following analysis. We start with a discussion of the basic notions of legitimacy and identity and already apply them to the specific context of the EU.

## **2. Legitimacy and Identity in the EU**

### **2.1 *Legitimacy***

In the context of the discussion on the EU, the notion of legitimacy is used very differently and sometimes even without a precise definition. In order to choose an appropriate notion of legitimacy for our purpose we begin with two analytical differentiations.

The first differentiation is that between *legitimacy* and *trust*. Easton (1965, 1975) makes this differentiation and points to two very different sources of diffuse support of a regime. Sources of legitimacy are the political value orientations of the citizens. To the extent that the regime corresponds in the eyes of the citizens to their preferred value orientations, they regard it as being legitimate. Sources of trust are generalized experiences. If the citizens are satisfied with the outcome of changing authorities over a longer period of time, they generalize them to the regime in the structural frame in which the authorities act. The more exact term is therefore *generalized trust*. This differentiation is similar to the one between input-legitimacy and output-legitimacy of Scharpf (1999). The meaning of legitimacy however loses part of its analytical precision if we locate it on the input as well as on the output side of the political process. We therefore prefer Easton's notion of legitimacy. In his understanding, legitimacy besides trust is one of the dimensions of the diffuse support of a regime. And diffuse support itself can be conceptualized and measured as an independent attitude, if it is detached from specific evaluation standards.

The second analytical differentiation is the one between *objective legitimacy* and *subjective legitimacy*. Objective legitimacy is determined in two steps. In a first step *justifiable* criteria

are identified, with their help a regime can be evaluated in a second step. If a regime corresponds to these criteria, Habermas (1992) employs the term “*Anerkennungswürdigkeit*” (*recognition worthiness*) of a political order. The claim to legitimacy that is justified by good reasons is valid independently of the factual approval of the citizens. Related to this objective notion of legitimacy is the assumption that such justifiable criteria can in the end only be normative ideas of democracy. In the literature on the legitimacy of the EU Beetham and Lord (1998) specify such a notion of legitimacy in a very elaborated way. They identify criteria of „normative justifiability“ (Beetham and Lord 1998: 9) of a liberal democracy and postulate that the legitimacy of every regime, which claims to be democratic, rests on these criteria. This would in their opinion also apply to a European democracy.

The subjective notion of legitimacy starts from the factual value priorities of the citizens. The criteria of legitimacy is the subjective congruence of these value priorities with the institutional structure of the regime. The stronger the citizens are convinced that this institutional structure corresponds to their own value priorities, the more they evaluate the regime to be legitimate. This is synonymous with the already elaborated notion of legitimacy of Easton. This subjective notion of legitimacy is appropriate when the persistence and the functioning of a regime is concerned. Both depend on the factual support of a regime by its citizens (Fuchs 2006). And this persistence and functioning of the EU is finally what is at stake in the contemporary discussion. Subjective and objective legitimacy are merged when the factual value priorities of the citizens correspond to those which are also normative justifiable. Most probably this is largely the case in well established democracies of Western societies.

The question that has to be discussed in the context of the EU is on which of the differentiated factors the support of the EU used to rest and still rests. In order to answer this question empirical analyses are necessary that take into account at least some of the different determinants simultaneously. However, so far there are only a few of such analyses (Rohrschneider 2002; Fuchs 2003; Marks and Hooghe 2003) and in our knowledge there is none that contains all theoretically relevant factors; therefore it remains to be an open research question.

Yet, on the basis of the just mentioned empirical analyses and the manifold theoretical studies on the legitimacy of the EU we can determine the most important factors, which can be

theoretically assumed to be important for the support of the EU. They are listed in Table 1 and assigned to the already differentiated dimensions of the support of a regime.

- Table 1 about here -

Before Maastricht the EC's prior task as an organisation was to establish a European market as broad as possible. This task was based on the assumption that a common market would finally bring about welfare gains for all. The attribution of this economic function to the EC was made by the political elites as well as by the average citizens. The evaluation criteria of the EC was consequently the economic performance. Since this involves economic benefit calculations – either for the own country or for the individual – it is an instrumental evaluation standard. A generalization of positive experiences – or positive interpretations transmitted by the media – with the economic outputs of the EC led to the generalized trust that the EC is functioning as it should do. In case the question of legitimacy was raised at all, it was sufficiently ensured by the indirect legitimation via the mediation of the nation states.

This changed with the treaty of Maastricht and the development towards the supranational regime of the EU. The increase of competences of the EU had as a consequence that its actions and decisions also touched upon economic interest conflicts between and within the nation states. Furthermore they had immediate impacts on the life conditions of the citizens and these impacts also were perceived by the citizens. This led to a politicisation of the EU and to an expansion of the evaluation standards. The EU was no longer only evaluated by economic criteria, but also by democratic criteria. The citizens no longer only evaluate the regime of their nation state, but increasingly also the regime of the EU depending on the extent to which it corresponds to their democratic value orientations. Only by applying these evaluation standards on the EU the already existing democratic deficit becomes apparent and important. Therefore the question of an independent and direct legitimation of the EU needs to be addressed.

In the table we specify democratic values as well as democratic performance as an evaluation criterion and therefore as a determinant of the support for the EU. This criteria does not refer to the institutional structure of the EU as it is fixed in the treaty documents but to the reality of the political processes. The specific point in question is here if and in how far the actions of the authorities and the outcomes of their decisions correspond to democratic norms, such as

the responsiveness to the demands of the citizens and the factual keeping of human rights (Fuchs 2003). A generalization of positive experiences with these actions and their outcomes would lead to the generalized trust that the EU is also in the spirit of this criteria functioning as it should do. The two categories of generalized trust listed in Table 1 are identical considering the fact that they refer to the performance of the EU and generalized corresponding experiences. Yet, they are different with reference to the evaluation standard that underlies the generalizations: economic performance is an instrumental evaluation standard and democratic performance is a normative one.

Following mainstream scientific discussions, the support for the EU by the citizens after Maastricht was based no longer only on economic benefit calculations, but also on democratic standards. The situation became even more complex after the enlargement to the East and the debate on the accession of new countries. Especially in public discussions the question of the identity of Europe was raised. This question rested on two intuitive beliefs: firstly, that Europe could not exist without boundaries if it did not want to lose its identity; and secondly, that a European identity was necessary for the further integration of Europe. We can assume that these elite and media debates have also filtered down to the citizens and that the question of the European identity has become an additional determinant of the support for the EU. The question of the European identity has also been issue to intellectual and scientific discussions. We address this point in the following section.

## ***2.2 Legitimacy and Identity***

In the process of drawing up the constitutional draft for the EU the question of what made up the specificity of Europe and which values were constitutive for Europe, was discussed very controversially. As is known, agreement could only be reached on some political basic values in the preamble, which could be found in a similar way in many constitutions of the world (Meyer 2004: 15) and consciously abstract from cultural peculiarities. Just as controversially and with even more media resonance the identity question was discussed against the background of a potential accession of Turkey to the EU. Given these controversies, apparently there can be no consensus in defining a European identity and we could leave this question to an intellectual discussion without any impact. However, such a conclusion can only be drawn if one tries, on the one hand, to define European identity objectively with

reference to history, religion etc. and if, on the other hand, it is not clear why a European identity is necessary at all. In the following we elaborate from a social scientific perspective wherein the function of a European identity lies and how we can determine a European identity.

The notion of collective identity will be discussed in further detail in section 3. At this stage we would only like to make a preliminary definition: The identity of a collective consists in the subjective feeling of its members to belong together. Easton (1965: 185) calls this the „we-feeling“ and regards it as a necessary condition for a certain number of individuals wanting to cooperate politically at all. Without such a willingness to cooperate based on a sense of belonging together every regime would disintegrate in the long run. This became apparent, for instance, in light of the development of Yugoslavia and the disintegration of the Soviet Union after the fall of communism. A first function of a collective identity is therefore to provide the basic readiness to cooperate, which is a fundamental precondition for the persistence of a regime. Of course, this function also applies to the regime of the EU.

Political cooperation in order to regulate common affairs is only thinkable within a structure with institutions and procedures, i.e. within the frame of a regime. However, according to Easton (1965), the regime has to be accepted as far as possible by its citizens in order to be able to fulfil its function. One of the sources of the acceptance of a regime is that it can also be perceived by the members of the collective as the expression of this collective. A second function of a collective identity is thus that it is one of the preconditions of the support for a regime. This implies that the collective identity has to already exist before the regime comes into existence. In the case of the EU the relationship of regime and identity is however more complex. We will return to this aspect in further detail later.

The most important decision rule during decision processes in a democratic regime is the majority rule. The logic of this rule is of course that there is always an outnumbered minority. The minority will accept the majority's decision to the extent that the majority as well as the minority belong to the same collective with which its members identify. As a consequence, a third function of a collective identity is the acceptance of majority decisions. This function will gain in importance when decisions within European institutions will be changed from the rule of unanimity to majority rule.

A fourth function of a collective identity is the production of solidarity among the members of the collective. This solidarity is most necessarily required when there shall be a redistribution in favour of disadvantaged population groups or in order to produce social justice. Given the immense asymmetries in the level of economic development of the member states of the EU and the further candidates for adherence such a redistribution is already taking place today on the level of the countries and will rather grow even more in future.

Thus far we have addressed several important functions of a collective identity or of a European identity, which will all have an impact on the support for the EU and its long term persistence. Therefore, it is reasonable to analyse the question of the European identity in further detail. Before treating the European identity itself, we want to discuss the basic concept of collective identity in order to facilitate a most precise approach to questions concerning European identity.

### **3. Collective Identity**

The term collective identity is often used in an ambiguous way. According to Meyer (2004) this diagnosis also applies to the discussion on the European identity. The lack of conceptual clarity accrues primarily when collective identity is determined in analogy to personal identity. Personal identity is a concept that traces back to psycho-analytical approaches (Erikson 1980). Within this frame the concept describes two things: Firstly, it claims that a unique person develops as the result of the identification (internalisation) with the values and norms of the significant socialisation agents in primary socialisation processes. Secondly, it suggests a consistency and identity of this unique person in diverse social contexts. The alternative to such an identity is a pathological disintegration of personality culminating in psychoses. This definition of identity is too heavily loaded for social scientific research questions.

In order to extract a clear and operationalisable definition of collective identity a simplification is necessary. This simplification can be made following sociological theories (Easton 1965; Nisbet 1966; Weber 1972) and social-psychological theories (Turner et al 1987; Hogg und Abrams 1988; Oakes et al. 1994). According to these theories the identity of a collective consists on the one hand in the common consciousness of individuals to belong to

a social entity that is marked by specific characteristics (Turner et al. 1987: 19). On the other hand it consists of a feeling or sense of belonging together (Easton 1965: 185; Weber 1972: 21). On the basis of this simplification we can make a more accurate definition of the term.

The identity of a collective is set up by cognitive operations and affective identifications. A first cognitive operation is the awareness that a certain social entity or social group exists. This awareness can only emerge if one or more traits are identified, which a number of individuals have in common, and if a demarcation is made who belongs to the entity and who is excluded. Cognitively this operation is most easily made when it rests on primordial traits such as, for example, the difference between the sexes. It is cognitively more complex when, for example, a national identity is at stake. We will return to this point later.

The second cognitive operation is the self-assignment of individuals to this collective. Without such a subjective assignment the collective would stay a purely cognitive phenomenon without social relevance. The affective identification consists of the emotional attachment to the collective of those individuals who subjectively assign themselves to the collective.

The identity of a collective described in this way is not a binary phenomenon (which essentially means that it either exists or does not exist) but a variable one with two dimensions. We start from the premise that via the first cognitive operation a collective is constituted purely cognitively and thus to some extent objectively. The two variable dimensions can then be formulated as follows:

1. The more individuals, which objectively belong to a collective, also subjectively assign themselves to the collective, the stronger is the identity of this collective.
2. The more individuals, which subjectively assign themselves to the collective, exhibit an emotional attachment to this collective and the more intense this emotional attachment is, the stronger is the identity of the collective.

These two “the more – the stronger” formulations are at the same time operationalisations of the term collective identity, which we will take as the basis for an empirical analysis of the European identity in a later section.

Insights into the psychological mechanisms in the emergence of a collective identity can be found in the “self-categorization theory” (Turner et al.1987; Oakes et al. 1994). This is a very elaborated social-psychological theory that is systematically formulated by a number of assumptions and hypotheses. Reference point of the theory is the individual (self), which possesses a social identity as well as a personal identity . This social identity is the result of a self-categorization: individuals form social groups (categorization) and assign themselves to them. This is equivalent to the ideas of the already mentioned theoretical approaches. Two further aspects of this self-categorization theory go beyond these ideas. The first one is that self-categorization is explicated in closer detail. It is understood as an in-group-out-group categorization. This follows the so-called *meta-contrast principle*, according to which a number of individuals characterise themselves as a group to the extent to which the subjectively perceived differences between them are less than subjectively perceived differences between them and other people (Turner et al. 1987). Oakes et al. (1994: 195) phrase this as follows: ”following the meta-contrast principle, *social* categorization of the self and others becomes more likely as intergroup differences increase and intragroup, interpersonal differences decrease.”

The second aspect of this theory relevant for our question is the differentiation and contextualisation of the self-categorization. Every individual always possesses a plethora of potential in-group-out-group categorizations. Depending on the situation and the stimuli related to this situation another categorization is activated (Turner et al. 1987) and if, for example, the situative stimulus is a conflict over a raise in wages then the most obvious in-group-out-group categorization is the one between employees and employers. Another example would be, if the situative stimulus is the allocation of financial exposures to member states of the EU, then the most obvious in-group-out-group categorization is the one between the own country and the other member states of the EU.

If we refer this point to the notion of collective identity, we have to assume that every individual possesses multiple social identities and that there are consequently also multiple collective identities. Applied to the EU multiple collective identities can be postulated that follow the political and territorial levels of organisation. The lowest level would then be the own city or the own village, the next higher level the region, then follows the country and lastly the EU. These form a hierarchical system with gradual levels of abstraction, in which the EU presents the highest level including all the others. This logic of abstraction is,

however, not identical with the logic of relevance in specific situations. We debate this question in the following section on the European identity.

## **4. European Identity**

### ***4.1 The Controversy on European Identity***

According to our analysis there are a series of reasons which speak for the necessity of a European identity. The most important reason of a European identity would be its role in the generation of legitimacy of the EU: “The absence of a shared collective identity is often considered the most serious of the obstacles to the development of political legitimacy at the European level“ (Beetham and Lord 1998: 33). Most of the commentators assume that such a European identity does not exist currently. Quoting Beetham and Lord (1998:29) once more: “Most commentators are agreed that a sense of European identity and loyalty is embryonic at best among the European electorate.“ If this diagnosis hold true, then, given the functional aspects which have been described, it will be problematic. However, it would be even more problematic if the assumption of many other scientists holds true, according to which such a European identity is impossible (among others Kielmansegg 1996; Offe 1998). These two aspects, that firstly, such a European identity does not exist currently and secondly, that it will not come into effect, are referred to a the no-demos-thesis in the discourse.

The arguments underlying the no-demos-thesis on the European level generally refer to the development and particularity of national identities. National identities have emerged from a long term historic process in Europe (Smith 1991; Schulze 1999). Often this historic process were marked by martial conflict constellations between nation states and the resulting collective experiences of pride and suffering. This historic process also includes nation building via a homogenisation of language and religion, which was implemented through the state centres. At least this is the case for some of the most important European nation states. These historic experiences remained in the collective memory of the people and was the basis of their collective identity. Simultaneously, this meant that the *demos* of nation states regimes derives from a substrate, the *nation* (Fuchs 2000), and it is this nation that creates collective identity.

If national identities are considered the only reference point then the development of a European identity is in deed with rarely any prospects. None of the prerequisites named before would be given. No common historic experience as that of national collectives have it is given, neither a common language nor a common religion. Not even a definite border between Europe and Asia, neither geographically nor historically, exists (Lepsius 1999). In contrast to the historically grown and deep-rooted national identities, a European identity would thus have no chance to develop and gain in significance of its own.

This thesis of the impossibility of such a European identity has not been left unrefuted (Beetham und Lord 1998; Habermas 1998; Kohli 2000; Fuchs 2000; Meyer 2004). In the following this thesis shall be considered in three steps. Firstly, we shall analyse in how far such a European identity exists and secondly, to which extent an objective basis for a later development of identity can be identified and thirdly, which conditions must be fulfilled to promote European identity.

#### ***4.2 Starting Point for a European Identity***

The European Community (EC) was not merely founded as a economic partnership of convenience. At least for the founding fathers this “idea of Europe” played an important role, if not the most important. It was supported by the idea that with the help of such a European community the martial disputes between the nation states which prevailed for centuries shall finally be settled. This “idea of Europe” was in fact particularly successful, yet it remains an open question which role this idea plays in the consciousness of today’s political elites and the citizenry. There is no empirical information given to answer this question, but it can be assumed that the idea has not been entirely lost and has formed a certain type of background consciousness. Given this, it could be a possible source of a European identity which so far exists diffusely.

Yet, for a European consciousness some concrete sources can be denoted. On the one hand the citizens of the members states of the EU certainly know, that there exists a European market and every day the experience, that there exists a European currency. On the other hand they probably also know that there exist European institutions which make aftermath decisions and are predominantly located in Brussels. This matter of fact is not impacted by the

fact that the cognitive representation of the EU-institutions is a blurred concept among the citizens. Based on the presumed knowledge, we assume that the citizens of Europe at least describe themselves as Europeans. The empirical findings listed in Table 2 provide evidence in support of this assumption.

- Table 2 about here -

In section 3 (concept of collective identity) an operationalisation of collective identity was conducted based on a cognitive operation: the more individuals, which objectively belong to the collective and subjectively assign themselves to the collective, the stronger is the identity of the collective. According to the percentages listed in Table 2 a narrow majority of the citizens of the 25 member states of the EU describe themselves *also* as Europeans (58.9 percent) and 41.1 percent assign themselves only to their nation. The interpretation of this finding based on a well known indicator of the Eurobarometer is controversial: is the glass half full or half empty? The “the more – the stronger” formulation named above does not contain a threshold and therefore it does not provide an answer for the question. We consider the matters of fact, that now already a majority of citizens describe themselves as Europeans, as an empirical proof for a European identity for two reasons. Firstly, this finding is barely compatible with the thesis that national identity is virtually the exclusive form of collective identity. Secondly, a primary assignment to the own nation is rational as far as the interests of the citizens are articulated and carried out by representatives of the nation states.

However, a subjective assignment to a collective is only a first and not a very strong criterion for a collective identity. It primarily represents a cognitive operation which so far does not allow for statements on the attachment to the collective so far. A second and stronger criterion of a collective identity is the emotional attachment to this collective. We have operationalised the latter as follows: the more individuals assign themselves to the collective, thus show an emotional attachment to the collective, and the more intense this emotional attachment to the collective is, the stronger is the identity of the collective. Two indicators of the Eurobarometer 62.0 can measure such attachments (c.f. Table 3 and 4)

- Table 3 about here -

- Table 4 about here -

The percentages of Table 3 refer to the attachment of the European citizens to their own country and to Europe. Whereas Table 4 refers to the pride in the respondents nation or in Europe. In contrast to the self-description (c.f. Table 2) the question did not confront the nation with Europe but acquired the data separately. Furthermore, the data was measured by a four-point scale. Hence, the results are rather remarkable. As expected the attachment towards the own nation and the pride in the own nation is comparatively stronger than the corresponding attitudes towards Europe. However, the strength of the emotional attachment to Europe is rather surprising: 68.8 percent of the respondents feel attached to Europe and 72.2 percent are proud of Europe. This emotional commitment, both regarding the own nation as well as Europe, already signifies that in both cases it is not an exclusive but an additional dimension of a multiple identity. This becomes even more evident if the attachment to the own country is cross-tabulated with the attachment to Europe. Accordingly, 71,6 percent of the respondents which are attached to their country are also attached to Europe.

In our judgement the presented empirical findings for the self-description as Europeans as well as the emotional commitment to Europe unambiguously show that currently there already exists a European identity. However, the question arises how sustainable this currently existing identity is and how it can be expanded. Both aspects will be addressed in the following.

### ***4.3 Commonalities and Demarcations***

Every subjective allocation to a collective and every emotional attachment to the collective derives on the one hand from the perceived commonalities between the members of the collective and, on the other hand, the perceived differences to those that do not belong to the collective. In general, these are subjective constructs, however they are not entirely arbitrary. The construction of commonalities and differences partially originates from things that actually exist or have actually existed. Concerning the national identities, this would be the commonly shared history, especially with its positive but also its negative events, which are engrained in the memories of the peoples. In the light of the fact, that Europe does not have such a commonly shared history and in the light of the plethora of national identities, a European identity must be a political and democratic one (Habermas 1998; Fuchs 2000; Meyer 2004). The necessary condition is that there exist objective commonalities in political

value orientations and the fact that these value orientations can be objectively differentiated from those of others. The sufficient condition is that the Europeans themselves are aware of the fact that these commonalities and demarcations exist and thus become the basis of their construction of identity. Due to the data base only the second question on objective commonalities and demarcations can be empirically analysed.

We differentiate between three theoretically relevant dimensions of democratic value orientations (c.f. Table 5). The first dimension refers to the *kratos* component of democracy, thus it refers to the type of government or regime. The other two refer to the *demos* component. One refers to the individual as a member of the demos and the other refers to the other members of the demos. The two latter dimensions of value orientations is at the same time characteristic of a civic community in Putnam's (1993) understanding.

On the basis of ten indicators of the three dimensions we analyse in how far the citizens of the EU core countries share common value orientations and in how far their value orientations differ from the citizens of other European regions and Turkey. The statistic device at the heart of this analysis is the discriminant analysis. In elucidating the device we restrict ourselves to some general remarks which are important for the understanding of the major findings listed in Table 5.

The discriminant analysis relies on the fixing of a predefined group. In our case, this predefined group consists of the core countries of the EU. We assume that the pattern of value orientations in this predefined group is adequately described by the ten given indicators. This also implies that the respondents of this group vastly share similar value orientations. Thus the predefined group poses a benchmark for the comparison with the undefined group. We have specified Southern, Central, Eastern Europe and Turkey as undefined groups.

- Table 5 about here -

Table 5 lists several measures which describe how strong the separation between the European core countries and the compared groups is. One of these measures is the canonical correlation. The higher this canonical correlation is, the stronger the difference between the benchmark countries and the compared group. The concrete correlations show that the difference between the EU core countries on the one hand and Southern and Central Europe,

on the other hand, is relatively low. In contrast, the difference between the EU core countries and Eastern Europe as well as Turkey is rather harsh.

Which of the ten value orientations are the source for the difference between the EU core countries and Eastern Europe as well as Turkey? This can be answered with the help of the correlation coefficients (standardized canonical discriminant function coefficients) which are all displayed for the ten indicators and the four groups of the comparison. The higher the coefficient, the more important the indicator for the discrimination between the benchmark group and the compared group. Both in Eastern Europe as well as in Turkey the rejection of autocratic rule and social and ethnic tolerance have the highest value. Thus, the value orientations of the citizens of these countries differ from those of the EU core countries particularly in the significantly low rejection of the autocratic rule (negative sign) and the significantly lower tolerance towards minority groups and deviating ethnic convictions. Turkey furthermore has a significantly lower recognition of women as equal.

Before we draw some conclusions from this briefly explicated analysis, we want to make some further remarks on the creation of groups. We did not apply the different accession waves to the EC/EU as a criterion, but by theoretically meaningful criteria for the classification of the European countries (see in this regard Huntington 1996; Reisinger 1999; Fuchs and Klingemann 2002). We started the discriminant analysis with the group of only those countries as benchmark which belonged to the EC from the very beginning. As it became obvious during the analysis, the political value orientations of citizens from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Great Britain, Ireland and Sweden effectively do not differ from those of the founding countries of the EC, they were pooled in a new benchmark group. Therewith we have already stated the first result of the analysis: there are no noteworthy differences between the founding countries of the EC and those of the first accession wave to the EU regarding their political value orientations. To phrase it in a positive way: the citizens of Western and Northern Europe share common political value orientations.

The difference between the benchmark group and the countries of Southern and Central Europe is also relatively small. This empirical finding corresponds to Huntington's thesis that there is a Western civilisation with common value orientations to which these countries belong. In contrast to this finding, the differences to Eastern Europe and to Turkey are considerable. Within Eastern Europe this is especially the case for the Slavic successor states of the former Soviet Union, but also for the countries with a Moslem majority (for further

detail c.f. Fuchs and Klingemann 2002). In this case the empirical findings are also compatible with Huntington's thesis that the Western civilisation differs significantly from the Slavic-Orthodox and the Islamic one.

If boundaries shall be drawn according to the criterion of objective commonalities and differences in value orientations of citizens, they would have to be made between Western and Northern Europe on the one hand and Orthodox and Moslem countries in Eastern and Southeast Europe on the other hand. In how far this objective demarcation also corresponds to the subjective one of the citizens, is another question. Yet, there exists an objective basis for this subjective demarcation, to which one can revert in the political debate about the Eastern enlargement.

## **5. Conclusions and Perspectives**

Our analysis started with two premises. Firstly, we assumed that a European identity is functionally necessary. The most important function is its contribution to the legitimacy of the EU. Secondly, we assumed that there is currently no European identity and that its emergence will not be possible even in the future. If both assumptions were right, we would have a hardly resolvable dilemma.

On the basis of our definition and operationalisation of collective identity and the presented empirical findings, the assumption that there is currently no European identity can hardly be maintained. After all, 68,8 percent of the citizens of the 25 member states of the EU feel attached to Europe and 72,3 percent are proud to be European. Thus, today there is already more than a starting point for the emergence of a European identity. Apparently European citizens exhibit multiple identities including the national as well as the European one. Yet, this does not answer the question of how sustainable this European identity is. We assume that a European identity can only be a political one which means simultaneously that it lacks the historic and cultural foundations, characteristic of national identities. In case of a conflict between European and national identity the latter would therefore most probably prevail. This is also illustrated by the referenda on the draft of a European constitution in France and the Netherlands.

For a further clarification of this question we refer to a hypothesis of social-psychological theories of collective identity which have been discussed. According to this thesis the different in-group-out-group categorizations of which the individual disposes – in our terminology the different parts of the multiple identity – are activated depending on the situation and the stimuli relevant in this situation. As long as the interests of the citizens on the European level are first and foremost represented by the delegates of their nation states, the European identity will surely not be activated, but the national one. The same holds true for as long as it is not the EU that is the authoritative actor in international conflicts but still the nation states. For sure, there exists a European identity, but due to the kind of political decision processes on the European and international level it is not permanently activated and stabilised. This could probably change only when the regime of the EU itself is a relevant actor for representing the interests of the citizens. This would plead for a further political integration of the EU. However, the factual situation is a bit more complicated.

As the term nation state already expresses the state and nation building processes in Europe have took place either simultaneously or the nation was even created the state. Thus national identity is unthinkable without a state. At the same time, this means that the sovereignty of a state – and after the transformation of states into democracies at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century – the sovereignty of the people are constitutive characteristics of national identity. If we assume that these national identities are deep-rooted, then European identity should never be juxtaposed to national identity. For a further emergence of European identity a stronger political integration of the EU is necessary. However, this may not undermine the autonomy of national democracies to the extent, that European identity can pose a threat to national identity. There is surely no panacea for this institutional balancing act, which derives of these imperatives. However, we shall revert to this aspect in the summary discussion of the legitimation of the EU

We have already elaborated that the support of the EU regime until Maastricht was based primarily on economic criteria and secondarily on the idea of Europe. By expanding the EU's competences during and after Maastricht and the Eastern Enlargement, the decisions made by EU institutions more and more affected distributional conflicts and the immediate life situation of the citizens. Figure 1 schematically describes these relations.

- Figure 1 about here -

An additional standard for evaluation are the democratic criteria, which essentially are the democratic values and democratic performance (see Table 1). Due to the changing of function, an indirect legitimation via nation states is no longer sufficient for the EU and thus a direct legitimation is required. Direct legitimation must be based on democratic values, which simultaneously exerts pressure on the EU towards a transformation to a European democracy. The establishment of a European democracy would also mean an institutionalisation of those political values which are shared by the majority of the citizens of the EU member states. This way the objective similarities in value orientation will also be experienced subjectively and will thus provide a further basis for a European identity.

This solution, however, is hotly debated by the political elites. In any case, it requires two prerequisites. Firstly, such a democratic transformation of the EU regime must occur given the consensus and participation of the citizens, so they can perceive the resulting regime as their product. Secondly, the democratic regime of the EU must be compatible with the demands of autonomy of the nation state democracies. To implement these prerequisites a decent share of political and institutional fantasy is required.

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**Table 1: Determinants of the Support of the EU**

<b>Time Dimension</b>	<b>Determinants</b>	<b>Theoretical Dimension</b>
<b>Before Maastricht</b>	<i>Economic performance</i>	<i>Generalized trust</i> (instrumental standard of evaluation)
	(additional)	
<b>Between Maastricht and the Eastward Enlargement</b>	<i>Democratic values</i> (congruence between values and regime)	<i>Legitimacy</i>
	<i>Democratic performance</i>	<i>Generalized trust</i> (normative standard of evaluation)
	(additional)	
<b>After the Eastward Enlargement</b>	<i>European identity</i>	<i>Collective identity</i>

**Table 2: Self-description as European (percentages<sup>a</sup>)**

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<b>Self-description</b>	
Nationality only	41.1
Nationality and European	49.8
European and Nationality	5.9
European only	3.3
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	100

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Source: Eurobarometer 62.0

Question: In the near future, do you see yourself as a) nationality b) nationality and European c) European and nationality d) European only?

<sup>a</sup> Weighted aggregate of all 25 EU countries

**Table 3: Attachment to Country and the EU (percentages<sup>a</sup>)**

	<b>Country</b>	<b>Europe</b>
Very attached	56.1	20.0
Fairly attached	36.3	48.8
Not very attached	6.2	23.9
Not at all attached	1.5	7.4
	100	100

Source: Eurobarometer 62.0

Question: People feel different degrees of attachment to their town or village, to their region, to their country or to Europe. Please tell me how attached you feel to a) your city/town/village b) your region c) your country d) Europe?

<sup>a</sup> Weighted aggregate of all 25 EU countries

**Table 4: National Pride and European Pride (percentages<sup>a</sup>)**

	<b>Nation</b>	<b>Europe</b>
Very proud	46.2	17.0
Fairly proud	42.1	55.3
Not very proud	9.2	19.4
Not at all proud	2.5	8.2
	100	100

Source: Eurobarometer 62.0

Question: Would you say you are very proud, fairly proud, not very proud, not at all proud to be (nationality)? And would you say you are very proud, fairly proud, not very proud, not at all proud to be European?

<sup>a</sup> Weighted aggregate of all 25 EU countries

**Table 5: Differentiation between European Core Countries<sup>a</sup> and other European Regions and Turkey**

	Southern Europe <sup>c</sup>	Central Europe <sup>d</sup>	Eastern Europe <sup>e</sup>	Turkey
<i>I. Forms of Government</i>				
1. Support for democratic rule	.019 <sup>b</sup>	.417	.313	.085
2. Rejection of autocratic rule	-.098	-.144	-.420	-.458
3. Self-responsibility vs. state responsibility	.466	.444	.388	.094
<i>II. Self as political actor</i>				
4. Political motivation	.267	-.082	-.044	.024 <sup>b</sup>
5. Political participation (non-institutionalized)				
6. Civic engagement (voluntary associations)	.099	.099	.124	.148
<i>III. Relationship to others</i>				
7. Recognition of the others as equal (equality of women)	.416	-.006 <sup>b</sup>	.095	.430
8. Trust in the others	.518	.469	.261	.244
9. Social tolerance	.461	.695	.702	.878
10. Ethic tolerance	.743	.396	.605	.401
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	.074	.156	.584	.582
<i>Canonical Correlation</i>	.263	.367	.607	.606
<i>Correctly classified</i>	64.3 %	68.9 %	79.1 %	91,1 %
<i>Mean (benchmark countries)</i>	.561	.591	.711	.895
<i>Mean (undefined group)</i>	.451	.409	.299	.114

Source: Eurobarometer 62.0

<sup>a</sup> Benchmark countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden

<sup>b</sup> non-significant at the .001 level

<sup>c</sup> Greece, Malta, Portugal, Spain

<sup>d</sup> Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia

<sup>e</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro

**Figure 1: The EU Regime and its Basis of Legitimation**

